

WINNING THE WAR AGAINST NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

TALK
IT OVER

DATE: SUNDAY, 19TH OF SEPTEMBER 2021 | WINNING THE WAR IN THE MIND SERIES: PART 5

ROMANS 12:2

.... be transformed by the renewing of your mind.

2 CORINTHIANS 10:5

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin.

PHILIPPIANS 1:12-14

Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters] that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.

NOTES FOR LEADERS:

Please diarise our next prayer and leaders meeting, which will take place in person on Tuesday, the 28th of September.

START TALKING

1. Which part of Sunday's message was most impactful for you and why?
2. Do you use filters on your photos on social media? If so, which one is your favourite?

START THINKING

1. On Sunday, Steve said: "It is very difficult to live a positive life if you have a negative mind." Do you agree with this statement, and why? Why do you think it is important for us to control negative thoughts?
2. Romans 12:2 says that we should "be transformed by the renewing of your mind". On a practical level, how do we go about renewing our minds?

START SHARING

1. Read Philippians 1:12-14. In this verse, Paul 'reframed' his imprisonment by looking at what God was doing. What tough situation have you been through in the past year where you were able to 'reframe' your thoughts and focus on the positive in the situation?
2. Are you currently battling a personal struggle? What practical steps are you going to take to reframe your thoughts and look for God in your struggle? How can we pray for you as a group?

START PRAYING

Father, give us eyes to see Your faithfulness, goodness, and grace at work in every situation. Draw us close to You. Help us to reframe our perspective and look for You in all things. Amen.

START DOING

Reframing our thoughts is a discipline habit that we need to work on daily. Over the next 30 days, practice using Scripture as a weapon to fight negative thoughts.

SUMMARY

OF SUNDAY'S MESSAGE

The major battlefield for the direction of our lives is in our minds. Our thoughts determine our decisions, and our decisions determine our destiny. In the final week of our series, *Winning the War in the Mind*, Steve shared a practical message on winning the war against negative thoughts.

Have you ever noticed that even though most things in your life are going well, but your thoughts seem to fixate on the 5% of things that aren't? We are drawn to 'the hole in the middle of the doughnut' instead of all the "sweetness" that is there!

It is very difficult to live a positive life if you have a negative mind!

In Romans 12:2, Paul tells us to *.... be transformed by the renewing of your mind*. And in 2 Corinthians 10:5, he says: *"... and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ."*

If the Bible is so clear on taking control of our thoughts, how do we go about doing this?

1. Choose how you frame your thoughts.

In the book of Numbers, we read about 12 spies who were sent to survey the promised land and report back. These were people who had seen massive miracles and the power of God during their exodus from Egypt! All 12 saw the same thing in the promised land but reported back with different views. Ten of them reported that: *'We can't attack those people; they are stronger than we are.'* ... *They said, 'The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size ... We seemed like grasshoppers in our own eyes, and we looked the same to them.'* Numbers 13:31-33.

But Caleb and Joshua had framed their view on the same circumstances differently: *Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, 'We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it.'* Numbers 13:30.

Another example we see is in Philippians where Paul is imprisoned in Rome for preaching the Gospel. In a letter to his fellow Christ-followers, he writes: *Now I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has actually served to advance the gospel. As a result, it has become clear throughout the whole palace guard and to everyone else that I am in chains for Christ. And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.* Philippians 1:12-14.

How we frame our thoughts will determine how we see our situation.

2. Choosing to look up at the Father.

In mathematics, we can change a negative to a positive with a single vertical line. (A minus becomes a plus.) e.g. - 100 becomes + 100 (these numbers are 200 spaces apart on the number line.)

The way to go from a negative mindset to a positive view is very often a vertical line – we need to look up and connect with the Father in heaven. Our relationship with God is key to finding joy in all circumstances. As we look up, we see things through God's eyes – He is working in us through what's going on around us.

3. Choosing to use an "eternity frame."

An athlete approaches a race with the total distance in mind - if it's a 1500m race, they don't exhaust themselves by sprinting out of the starting blocks for the first 100m. They pace themselves for the full distance. The same goes for our faith journey – it's a marathon, not a sprint. When we find our mind focusing on negative thoughts, we should ask ourselves: "in light of eternity, how bad will today look?"

Paul framed his troubles with eternity in mind. In 2 Corinthians, chapter 1, he shares that they were under great pressure – far beyond their ability to endure. They despaired even of life itself! But, he goes on to say the following in 2 Corinthians 4:16-18: *For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.*

When we fix our eyes on eternity, it brings God's perspective to our current crises.

In negative situations, where does your frame go to? Reframing our thoughts is a discipline habit that we need to work on daily.